

# WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,  
and workers in the District of Columbia*

*Friday, February 28, 2003*

## 26 BILINGUAL OFFICERS ARE AMONG 41 NEW OFFICERS BEING ADDED TO NEIGHBORHOOD PATROLS

Forty-one new MPDC officers, including 26 bilingual members hired through a special Latino recruiting drive in Puerto Rico, are hitting the streets of DC. Chief Ramsey was joined by Mayor Williams in swearing in the new officers during a ceremony Friday afternoon at the National Zoo Auditorium in Northwest. The 41 officers are all experienced law enforcement professionals who previously worked at other police departments and were hired under the MPDC's "lateral entry" program. Twenty-six of them are bilingual officers who were hired from various law enforcement agencies in Puerto Rico as part of a special recruiting drive to increase Latino representation in the MPDC. The other lateral officers come from various federal, state, county, municipal and university police agencies in other states. To familiarize the lateral officers from Puerto Rico with DC's diverse Latino communities, the Department held a special orientation session on Latino history and culture in DC, and is providing ongoing training and mentoring to help ease the transition from the island to the mainland. All 41 officers have been assigned to neighborhood patrols in the police districts, with most of the bilingual officers assigned to the Third and Fourth districts.

Also Friday, the MPDC held graduation ceremonies for 36 detectives who completed a three-week course on homicide investigations. The group included 29 MPDC members—detectives recently assigned to the Violent Crimes Branch, as well as other detectives who will now be able to transition into that unit. The class also included seven investigators from other agencies (Prince George's County Police and US Park Police)—marking the first time in more than two decades that outside agencies have sought homicide investigation training from the MPDC.

## MPDC LOWERS EMERGENCY RESPONSE LEVEL, AS NATIONAL THREAT CONDITION RETURNS TO YELLOW

Attorney General Ashcroft and Homeland Security Secretary Ridge this past week announced that the National Threat Condition level has been lowered from Orange (high risk) to Yellow (elevated risk). As a result, the MPDC lowered its emergency response level from Level II to Level I, effective 12:30 pm on Thursday, February 27, 2003. In addition to "normal" operations, the MPDC has three levels of emergency response, with Level III being the highest. With the move to Level I, the MPDC de-activated its Joint Operations Command Center and discontinued its operation of the 14 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras that are mounted in the downtown area of the District. The Department remains vigilant to the threat of terrorism in DC and continues to coordinate its anti-terrorism and emergency preparedness efforts with other local and federal agencies.

① Read the complete news release at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=1948>

① Individuals interested in becoming a Metropolitan Police officers can now begin the application process on-line. Go to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ/officer.shtm>

① Read the news release at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=1927>

① For more information about the MPDC's CCTV system, go to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/CCTV.shtm>

① Learn more about the Homeland Security Advisory System at:  
<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=29&content=320>

## MORE SNOW MEANS MORE TRAFFIC HAZARDS

With more snowfall in DC this past week, the MPDC continued to urge motorists to drive cautiously. Here are some tips to remember:

- ☀ Reduce your speed and leave extra space between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you.
- ☀ Pay special attention to snow plows and emergency vehicles, and yield to those vehicles.
- ☀ Brush all of the snow off your vehicle before heading out. This includes the roof, hood and rear of your vehicle (to avoid snow flying into other vehicles), as well as your headlights, rear lights, and front and rear license plates.
- ☀ Drive with your headlights on at all times to increase your visibility.
- ☀ Make sure your vehicle has sufficient windshield fluid and your windshield wipers are adequate, as snow and salt can build up on your windshield.

① Get more information on snow emergency procedures in DC and winter driving safety tips at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=1950>

① While traffic fatalities are down 50% so far this year, a triple-fatality crash last week in Northeast shows the dangers of speeding and running red lights. Read the news release at:  
<http://www.mpdc.org/blue/news.asp?sid=1940>

## CHIEF RAMSEY TESTIFIES ON MPDC PERFORMANCE

In a hearing this past week before the DC Council's Committee on the Judiciary, Chief Ramsey provided an update on the MPDC's performance during fiscal years 2002 and 2003 (to date). The Chief noted that while crime increased in the 2001 calendar year for the first time in six years, crime in DC is still down 15 percent from 1997. He said preliminary numbers for 2002 indicate crime was steady last year, or even down slightly, although homicides, robberies and auto thefts did increase. The Chief also updated Councilmembers on plans for redrawing the boundaries of the District's Police Service Areas (PSAs). He said a final plan would be delivered to the Mayor shortly, after which Council and community input will be sought. The plan will substantially reduce the number of PSAs as a way to maximize resources, provide for more consistent leadership on the PSAs, and better align the PSAs with natural neighborhood boundaries and the delivery of other city services, which are organized around neighborhood clusters. Ramsey also updated Councilmembers on the continued need for improvements in the 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 systems, as well as recent performance in investigations, terrorism response, traffic safety, facilities, fleet, technology and other administrative improvements.

① Read the Chief's complete statement at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/stmts/2003/02/022503.shtm>

## NEWS & NOTES

**New Sexual Assault Unit.** The MPDC has formed a new unit within its Violent Crime Branch that specializes in the investigation of sexual assaults against adults citywide. (Sex cases involving juveniles continue to be handled by the Youth and Preventive Services Division.) The move is designed to improve investigative performance and sensitivity to crime victims in the critical area of sexual assaults. Located at Police Headquarters (300 Indiana Avenue, NW), the new Sexual Assault Unit is led by Lieutenant Martin Davis; the telephone number is (202) 727-3700.

**"Ask the Chief."** Chief Ramsey takes your phone calls and e-mails during his regular monthly program on WTOP radio: Thursday, March 6 from 10-11 am.

**New Parking Fines.** The fines for various parking offenses in DC are being increased effective March 1.

### DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 2/28/03)

- 2003: 33
- 2002: 32
- % Change: +3.1%

Arrests (week ending 2/22/03)

- Total: 457
- Drugs: 69

Firearm Recoveries (as of 2/26/03)

- Total: 296
- February: 128

Traffic Fatalities (as of 2/28/03)

- 2003: 6
- 2002: 12
- % Change: -50.0%